



**Senior Management Team Meeting**  
**Minutes of meeting held on 6 September 2023**  
09:00-12:00, Microsoft Teams

**Attendees:**

Nicola Vallance-Ross (NVR)	Head of Corporate Services – Chair
Ezmie McCutcheon (EMc)	Head of Communications
Nick Hobbs (NH)	Head of Advice and Investigations
Gina Wilson (GW)	Head of Strategy
Nicola Killean (NK)	Children and Young People’s Commissioner Scotland
Judith Chisholm (JC)	Executive Assistant - Minutes

<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and apologies</b>	
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Review of minutes from previous meeting and actions</b>	
	<p>The minutes of the Senior Management Team meeting held on 12 July 2023 were approved.</p> <p>Actions from the previous meeting were reviewed and the following actions were carried over:</p> <p>ACTION–breakdown of Strategy and Advice and Investigations budgets – Finance Officer and Head of Corporate Services to meet with Head of Advice and Investigations and Head of Strategy to agree level of detail which would like reported on in finance reports.</p> <p>ACTION– SMT to meet to discuss rephasing budget against any revised expected spend for this year.</p> <p>ACTION – SMT and the Commissioner to review and approve Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy by email.</p> <p>ACTION: Head of Advice and Investigations, Head of Communications and Head of Strategy to meet to discuss approach on hotel accommodation report.</p>	

<b>3.</b>	<b>Finance</b>	
	<p><b>Finance Reports</b></p> <p>The Head of Corporate Services provided an overview of the finance reports for June and July highlighting underspend and overspend to SMT and provided narrative for each of those.</p> <p>Allocation of spend was discussed in terms of certain costs. SMT agreed with the proposed approach.</p> <p><b>Budget Bid 2024-2025</b></p> <p>The budget submission has been agreed by SMT and the Commissioner and it has been submitted to the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body.</p>	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Governance</b>	
	<p><b>Risk assessments:</b></p> <p>It was agreed that it would be good to link the processes for risk assessments for participation activities and non-core activities to the risk register for operational risks.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Head of Strategy, Participation Officer and Executive Assistant to review and consider process map as part of developing the participation toolkit.</p> <p><b>Strategic plan</b></p> <p>We have to create our new strategic plan by 1 April 2024. The Commissioner provided an overview of initial thinking on process for preparing the strategic plan. This would include multiple strands of work including space for internal reflection, multiple ways of engaging with children and young people, including a targeted approach to hear from children whose rights are most at risk and engagement with external organisations via a series of roundtables. Our targeted approach to children and young people would be in line with our BSL strategy and other areas of priority focus.</p> <p>SMT agreed the staff members of the internal strategic plan working group who will lead on the project.</p>	

	<p>Next steps:</p> <p>The first meeting of the strategic plan working group is on Thursday 7 September.</p> <p>On 27 September the strategic plan working group will hold a planning session.</p> <p>On 28 September, we will have an all staff day to focus on the strategic plan. The first part of the session will provide an overview of the process and explain roles of staff within that. The second part of the session will be interactive and creative for staff to contribute ideas.</p> <p>The plan is to launch the external conversations in the week commencing the 20 November, World Children’s Day. We are exploring what that week will look like in terms of activities.</p> <p>External activities will then run from November to end January 2024.</p> <p>It was noted that as part of developing the strategic plan there is the opportunity to align this with the proposal to develop an options paper around our advice function.</p> <p>The roundtables would provide a good opportunity to explore the meaningful involvement of children and young people in governance.</p>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Delivery Plan and Projects - Exceptions Reporting</b>	
	<p><b>Strategy</b></p> <p>We are short on capacity in the team particularly in Policy which is having a significant impact on policy work in certain thematic areas, namely climate justice and poverty. We do not have the capacity to react to the launch of General Comment No.26 but we will be able to revisit this following the launch. In terms of poverty work the Scottish Government has now published its work around infant food poverty, which we were involved with, but response not time sensitive given Scottish Government’s timescales. We need to revisit our joint work with the Poverty and Inequality Commission as they are only doing urgent agreed work.</p> <p>Recruitment and Induction – busy period in terms of recruitment which has had an impact on the team and our capacity to respond to other matters.</p>	

	<p>Incorporation of the UNCRC– continues to be huge and ongoing focus for Strategy and A&amp;I. It is difficult to predict the volume of work and capacity that be involved. Balancing capacity on this with the consultation on the Human Rights Bill.</p> <p><b>Communications</b></p> <p>We are working on a project to have the symbols resource updated with the Commissioner’s offices of England and Wales. It has been delayed due to budget discussions. This delay could result in a lack of resources available for the refresh of strategic plan consultations. Agreed that if England office could not commit to budget required then we should proceed as it is an essential resource.</p> <p><b>Advice and Investigations</b></p> <p>Recruitment– this has had an impact on capacity in the team.</p> <p>There have been delays to our report on secure unit visits and our report on hotel accommodation for refugee and asylum seeking families, and for families experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>Illegal Migration Act – still waiting for the Scottish Government action plan.</p> <p>To ensure capacity for priority legal work around Incorporation and the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Bill, the team are reviewing work and capacity to see if other organisations better placed to lead on next phase of pieces of work.</p> <p><b>Corporate Services</b></p> <p>Two projects have been delayed: the HR project to update Employee Handbook and associated policies and the procurement improvement project.</p> <p>In terms of highlights audit went well and the budget bid has been submitted. The procurement project is nearly complete.</p> <p>It was noted that for petty cash is to be used predominantly for young people’s participation expenses. Staff expenses to be paid via claim form.</p>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Participation</b>	
	<p>The next Young Advisors Group sessions are booked in. One online and an in person meeting on 7 October to seek the Young Advisors’ input on strategic</p>	

	<p>planning process and explore where they would like to be involved. Following evaluation at the last Young Advisors meeting there was a clear request for more opportunities, which is good feedback.</p> <p>The Participation Officer is working on the participation toolkit and looking at refreshing some policies and templates.</p> <p>Mental Health Investigation – BBC Radio 5 live interview, which is a great opportunity for Young Advisors to talk about recommendations from the investigation. The Young Advisors have an invitation to potentially attend the Scottish Government and COSLA network meeting at which the recommendations from the Mental Health Investigation will be discussed. It is positive that decision makers are open to having young people at the meeting.</p> <p>Special CPD course on Children’s Human Rights at Strathclyde University – We are sitting on a panel and running a workshop. This could be an opportunity for our Young Advisors to participate in terms of the Mental Health Investigation.</p>	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Any other business</b>	
	<p>ACTION - Bridgeside House Management Group – SMT noted various matters to be discussed with the Bridgeside House Management Group, namely that the Fire Alarm has lights so that Deaf people know the alarm is going off, accessibility of the building for wheelchair users and whether the building has RAC concrete.</p> <p>All staff team meetings – SMT and the Commissioner agreed to trial new model for those.</p>	
	<b>Date of next meeting: 4 October 2023</b>	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Summary of actions:</b>	
	<p>ACTION–breakdown of Strategy and Advice and Investigations budgets – Finance Officer and Head of Corporate Services to meet with Head of Advice and Investigations and Head of Strategy to agree level of detail which would like reported on in finance reports.</p> <p>ACTION– SMT to meet to discuss rephasing budget against any revised expected spend for this year.</p> <p>ACTION – SMT and the Commissioner to review and approve Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy by email.</p>	<p><b>NVR/GW /NH</b></p> <p><b>SMT</b></p> <p><b>SMT/NK</b></p> <p><b>GW/NH/ EMc</b></p>

	<p>ACTION: Head of Advice and Investigations, Head of Communications and Head of Strategy to meet to discuss approach on hotel accommodation report.</p> <p>ACTION: Head of Strategy, Participation Officer and Executive Assistant to review and consider process map as part of developing the participation toolkit.</p> <p>ACTION – Head of Corporate Services to raise the matters with the Bridgeside House Management Committee</p>	<p><b>GW/JC</b></p>
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